

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



Administrative Issuance: CFSA-09-26

TO: All CFSA and Contracted Agency Staff

FROM: Debra Porchia-Usher, Deputy Director for Agency Programs

DATE: December 2, 2009

RE: Notice of Removal to Adult Relatives of Children and Youth Entering Foster Care

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requires that child welfare agencies exercise due diligence to identify and provide notice to all adult grandparents and other adult relatives of a child within 30 days after the child is removed from his or her home. In providing for the safety, permanency and well-being of the families that reside in the District of Columbia, CFSA shall comply with this requirement. In instances where children must be removed from the home due to a substantiated finding of child abuse and/or neglect against a parent, early identification and notice to other adult relatives and significant non-relatives may shorten the child's or youth's stay in foster care. Providing timely and appropriate notice to family members will enable them to get involved early in the child's or youth's care and/or placement. If CFSA must take custody of the child or youth, the relatives may provide permanency to the child or youth by serving as kinship foster parents. A relative or significant non-relative who cannot serve as a placement resource for the child or youth, may be able to serve as a support person for the child or youth while in foster care.

In accordance with the above stated requirement, CFSA requires that within, 30 days of a child's or youth's entry into foster care, the investigator/social worker shall use reasonable efforts to identify and locate any absent parent(s), all maternal and paternal grandparents, other adult relatives and significant non-relatives of the child or youth, (especially those suggested by the parents or children or youth of an appropriate age, upon removal). The investigator/social worker shall notify these adult relatives and significant non-relatives of the removal and provide them with information regarding their custodial options. An exception may be made due to family or domestic violence. Any exception should be discussed by the investigator/social worker with his/her supervisor and documented in FACES.

This administrative issuance provides guidance and procedures for CFSA and private agency staff when working with the families of children or youth that are removed from the home. If you have any questions regarding this issuance, please contact your Program Administrator.

Efforts to Identify, Locate and Provide Notice to all Grandparent(s), Adult Relatives and/or Significant Non-Relatives

Once the investigator/social worker has made a determination to remove the child and/or youth from the home, he or she shall exhaust all reasonable efforts to obtain the address and telephone numbers from the caretaker of all adult relatives and/or extended family members who are significant to the family and/or to the child or youth.

1. Within 30 days of a child's or youth's entry into foster care, the investigator/social worker shall exhaust all reasonable efforts to identify, locate and provide notice of the child's removal to the following individuals: absent parent(s) (including the birth father), all maternal and paternal

grandparents, all parties identified by caretakers, parents, children and youth as significant to the family or the child or youth and, when appropriate, all other adult relatives and significant non-relatives.

2. When contact information is not available upon the child's or youth's initial removal, within 14 business days of the child's or youth's entry into foster care, the investigator/social worker shall attempt to obtain the address of any relative for whom only a telephone number is given by phoning that relative to request his or her mailing address. The investigator/social worker shall inform the relative of the purpose of the telephone call and notify him or her that the child or youth is in foster care. Written notice of the child or youth entering foster care shall be mailed after obtaining the mailing address.
3. The notice shall include the following information :
 - a. The names of the relative or significant non-relative children placed in CFSA's care;
 - b. The explanation of the options the relative or significant non-relative has concerning the care and placement of the child;
 - c. Information regarding the process of becoming a foster or kinship provider and any available subsidy payments; and
 - d. A description of additional resources, services and supports available in the event the child(ren) or youth are placed in their home

Note: The social worker shall use his or her discretion when notifying relatives and significant kin of the child's removal and be mindful of confidentiality issues. Information regarding the circumstances that led to the child's removal shall be shared, only as appropriate (i.e., if the child or youth is placed with the relative or significant non-relative or the relative or significant non-relative becomes involved in the child's care.)

4. The investigator/social worker shall maintain a copy of all Notice to Relatives of Child's Removal Forms that are sent to all adult relatives and significant kin in the case record (in Section E).
5. When available at the time of removal, the investigator/social worker shall forward any information pertaining to the identification and location of the absent parents, adult grandparents, adult relatives and significant non-relatives to the FTM Coordinator.
6. The investigator/social worker shall conduct a "search" to attempt to identify the above listed parties if their contact information is invalid or their whereabouts are unknown (*see Diligent Search Policy for more information*).
7. For any of the parties the investigator/social worker is unable to locate, he or she shall make a referral to the Diligent Search Unit (*see Diligent Search Policy for more information*)
 - a. The assigned social worker shall continue to search for adult relatives and significant non-relatives on an on-going basis (at a minimum, every 90 days) until the child achieves permanency. All efforts to locate adult relatives and significant non-relatives shall be documented in the case plan.
 - b. The investigator/social worker shall also document all efforts to identify, locate, and provide notice to all adult relatives and significant non-relatives and enter the results of the search in FACES, including when, where and how attempts were made and why attempts to locate identified adult relatives or significant non-relatives were unsuccessful.